United Nations S/PV.7484

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7484th meeting

Tuesday, 14 July 2015, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Van Bohemen	(New Zealand)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Chad	Mrs. Alingue
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Mrs. Jakubonė
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2015/486)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. *Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

15-21826 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2015/486)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Martin Kobler, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/486, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Martin Kobler and Her Excellency Mrs. Dina Kawar, Permanent Representative of Jordan, in her capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I now give the floor to Mr. Kobler.

Mr. Kobler: At the outset, I would like to extend my most heartfelt congratulations to New Zealand for its current leadership of the Security Council.

(*spoke in French*)

Since it is the Fourteenth of July, I would like to pay due tribute to France on its National Day.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

Also allow me to express my best wishes to all Muslims during this month of Ramadan and on the upcoming festival of Eid Al-Fitr.

(*spoke in English*)

I wish to thank the Security Council for renewing our robust mandate. I have no doubt that its fulfilment will pave the way to a more stable, more secure and more peaceful Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, the success of our mandate depends upon a continued constructive partnership with the Government. Today, I would like to update the Council on three issues that deserve our persistent engagement: first, the security situation in the east; secondly, the electoral process; and, thirdly, the strategic dialogue between the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the United Nations and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The protection of civilians is at the core of the MONUSCO mandate and at the forefront of all our military activities. Allow me to begin by telling the Council about a ray of hope that I have just seen on one of our front lines. As we speak, the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) military cordon and search operations, supported by MONUSCO forces against the Forces de résistance patriotiques en Ituri (FRPI), are ongoing. Those operations have been the most effective since the fall of the Mouvement du 23 mars. They are a testament to what our collective efforts can achieve.

Let me be clear: not to use force is always our preferred option. Our priority was to ensure that the FRPI disarmed voluntarily. We actively participated and supported the negotiations that would have allowed the combatants to reintegrate into civilian life. However, the use of force proved to be inevitable this time. After missing three consecutive deadlines to surrender, MONUSCO forces, in support of the Congolese army, engaged the FRPI in a jointly planned and coordinated response. The Congolese army's ground offensive, aided by our attack helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles, proved to be effective. In that regard, I wish to thank the Deputy Force Commander and my Deputy, Mr. David Gressly, for their active engagement in the negotiations.

Since 3 June, our joint efforts have neutralized about one fourth of the total FRPI strength. Beyond purely military successes, peace consolidation will also necessitate the restitution of State authority and the creation of job opportunities, especially for the youth, and solutions for ex-combatants who would otherwise see better opportunities with the armed group. The operations demonstrate that, by joining forces, we can more effectively protect defenceless populations. By unifying our stance, we can consolidate peace. And by working together, we can restore hope.

(*spoke in French*)

The operations against the FRPI clearly demonstrate what we can achieve when the forces of MONUSCO and the Democratic Republic of the Congo work together. Allow me to commend the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the cooperation between MONUSCO forces and the FARDC in the operations against the FRPI. The results of the partnership clearly strengthen our commitment and determination to combat the threat represented by the armed groups.

(*spoke in English*)

While success in neutralizing the FRPI is possible, joint operations against the FDLR in North Kivu, South Kivu and Katanga have been at a standstill now for five months. However, we need to overcome the current impasse that has stalled our joint efforts against the FDLR. I have repeatedly highlighted an undeniable fact, that is, the Congolese Government has made great strides over the past 10 years in restoring security. However, in many parts of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the population remains at the mercy of a number of armed groups.

In early February, our support to joint operations against the FDLR were put on hold. Since then, the Congolese Government has elected to pursue those operations unilaterally. The suspension of joint cooperation by the FARDC goes beyond the original question on human rights. We have revised the human rights due diligence policy and are looking for ways to resume cooperation within the framework of our — and the Government's — commitment to human rights.

Despite the FARDC's progress in dislodging the FDLR from some of its strongholds, the Congolese army is finding it difficult to consolidate its hold on liberated areas. Today, the FDLR is returning to some of its previous strongholds. As a result, the population has been dragged into another cycle of violence. In Rutshuru and Nyiragongo territory — the theatre of anti-FDLR operations — insecurity is again on the rise. Incidents of targeted killings, rapes, armed robberies and abductions for ransom are becoming more common. United Nations staff and humanitarian relief workers have also been targeted.

Regrettably, the paralysis of anti-FDLR operations has cascaded into other fields of operation. The repercussions on the ground of that paralysis are tangible. In Beni, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) continues to instil fear in the hearts of a defenceless population. I continue to stress that we must not underestimate the Islamist nature of the ADF. Since October 2014, 327 civilians have lost their lives in terrorist attacks, and two of our Tanzanian peacekeepers paid the ultimate price in the course of their duties.

However, in the past week, MONUSCO's robust patrolling by 156 personnel and the United Nations police engagement in monitoring and advising nearly 900 Congolese policemen has probably prevented even more carnage. Nevertheless, I call on the Government to join forces, to work hand in hand and to provide the Congolese population its basic right to security and safety. Waiting is simply not an option. Every day we wait, more Congolese women cannot tend to their fields out of fear of being raped. Every day we wait, more Congolese villagers are forced to pay illegal taxes. Every day we wait, more Congolese children are recruited into armed groups, exploited and abused. We are united in purpose; let us also reunite in action.

The electoral process is at the core of the political discussions in Kinshasa. Peaceful and credible elections are the most reliable litmus test for any democracy. Elections alone are not a guarantee for stability, but the absence of credible elections is increasing the risk for instability. In November 2016, the Congo will hold presidential and legislative elections. The imperatives of resolution 2211 (2015) are crystal clear. A transparent and credible electoral process must be ensured, while respecting the Constitution and the electoral calendar. However, the responsibility for credible elections ultimately lies with the Government.

I see four significant difficulties that must be overcome to ensure a credible and transparent electoral process that meets the expectations of the Congolese population. First, a budget is urgently needed. Secondly, the electoral calendar has to be realistic. Thirdly, the voters' registry needs to be updated to include, for

example, young adults who have reached voting age since the last elections in order not to disenfranchise the young population. Fourthly, as in any elections, political space must be given to the opposition and civil society.

I welcome President Kabila's initiative to reach out to a wide range of stakeholders to find a way to ensure consensus on the electoral process. These consultations, however, should not delay the presidential and legislative elections that are to be held in November 2016, as foreseen by the Constitution and resolution 2211 (2015).

The strategic dialogue between MONUSCO and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo began in March. Since then, we have met at the highest levels with a common purpose in mind — setting in motion a gradual, mutually agreeable exit strategy and reinvigorating our sincere collaboration on issues of security, elections, human rights and communications, which are areas lying at the very heart of our mandate. I wish to thank the Government, and especially His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Raymond Tshibanda, for engaging with us so actively on the dialogue and for working tirelessly on this process. I am very pleased that the talks are progressing in a spirit of mutual confidence and trust.

In May, teams composed of MONUSCO staff and Government officials conducted joint missions in 29 territories across the 4 conflict-affected provinces. Armed with detailed questionnaires and following jointly agreed methodology, the teams travelled through most of the remote areas to obtain a first-hand understanding of the security situation prevailing in the east. They did not look for hearsay, academic analyses or reported facts. They wanted and reported on the reality on the ground as they saw it. Their findings are now being discussed with the Government and will serve as a basis for drawing joint conclusions on how and when we will eventually leave the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There are still differences on that issue. While the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo would like to immediately suggest a further reduction, we would rather have a phased and structured approach along the lines of the provisions of resolution 2211 (2015).

We all agree that MONUSCO must progressively leave the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We have, in fact, already begun the drawdown. Of the 2,000 troops earmarked to be reduced under the current mandate, 1,420 have already been repatriated, and other units will follow very soon. It is our common understanding that once we depart, peacekeeping forces do not have to return. The timeline for our departure should depend on the progress on the ground. The sooner the Government and MONUSCO join forces, the sooner armed groups will be eradicated. The sooner armed groups are eradicated and State authority is restored, the sooner more troops can be reduced.

In conclusion, allow me to touch briefly on a number of other important issues facing the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As I mentioned earlier, economic opportunities are vital for peacebuilding. When it comes to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there is one often-repeated truth — its natural riches could easily provide the Congolese population with what they want. Yet, despite abundant resources, a considerable growth rate and the availability of untapped resources, such as agriculture and human capital, the Congolese remain one of the poorest people in the world

The fall of commodity prices and investors' concerns about the stability of the country ahead of the elections are worrying signs. I welcome the efforts of Special Envoy Said Djinnit to organize an investors' conference in Kinshasa in February 2016. I invite national and international partners to invest in the young people, whose future should be not be hindered by high unemployment rates and a lack of opportunities.

The fight against armed groups will not be sustainably successful if questions of economic development and employment are not addressed. In this context, I want to highlight the visit of the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ambassador Dina Kawar, and her delegation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in May 2015. That visit underlined the importance of good governance in the mining sector, focusing further on the arms embargo and fostering cooperation between MONUSCO, the sanctions Committee and the Group of Experts.

Lastly, I have been monitoring the situation in Burundi very closely as the country has descended into violence over the past two months. As of today, over 140,000 people have fled into neighbouring countries, including 12,800 to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I highlight those events to remind us again of the importance of respecting the Constitution and of

creating the necessary political space for a national consensus around elections.

The implementation of the national, regional and international commitments of the Addis Ababa agreement requires the joint efforts of the international community. In this context, it is a pleasure to congratulate Mr. Ibrahima Fall on his appointment as the African Union Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region and Mr. Thomas Perriello as the new United States Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Africa. This strong team of envoys for the Great Lakes can indeed accompany the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the times ahead.

By tradition, I always conclude by thanking the national and international staff of the United Nations for their commitment to securing a better future for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Today, I wish to commend the performance of the troops of the Ituri brigade for their achievement in its protection mandate. They have truly demonstrated tremendous courage in actively engaging and pursuing the Forces de résistance patriotiques de l'Ituri over the past weeks. This is precisely this type of peacekeeping that the Force Commander and I have always advocated for. But even more importantly, this engagement is what the population and the Government expects from us.

I thank the Council for its continued and unrelenting support. We are all witnesses to a momentous moment in the history of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The seeds of a stable, secure and resilient Congo have already been planted. It is my hope that we will see them flourish in the coming years.

The President: I thank Mr. Kobler for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Kawar.

Mrs. Kawar (Jordan): I have the honour to brief the members of the Council in my capacity as the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In my statement, I intend to provide an overview of my visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda from 24 to 29 May. I will also briefly highlight the work of the Committee since 22 January, the most recent occasion on which I delivered a statement to the Council concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo sanctions (see S/PV.7367).

In my briefing on 22 January, I noted that the date of 12 March would mark 11 years since the Council established the sanctions Committee to monitor the implementation of the arms embargo. I had expressed the hope that, during the course of 2015, we would collectively acquire a better appreciation of the commitment to the implementation of the sanctions regime and what actions could be taken to address any gaps or deficiencies. I noted that I was aware of the challenges before us, particularly the differences of views in the region as to who bears the most responsibility for violating the sanctions. I also underlined the importance of the Committee's engaging with interlocutors by hearing their views and providing assistance, as necessary, so as to strengthen the implementation of the sanctions regime.

Several months later, I spent a week in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, which was the first occasion on which a Chair of the sanctions Committee had travelled to the Great Lakes region to assess the implementation of the arms embargo, assets freeze and travel ban. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to extend my utmost appreciation to the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda for having facilitated the visit. I would also like to take this opportunity to convey my personal thanks to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Kobler and his team in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), which provided invaluable support, particularly logistical support, during my stay in all three countries.

During the course of my visit, I explained to interlocutors that, in accordance with the terms of reference agreed upon by the Committee, the purpose of my visit was to learn how to improve the effectiveness of sanctions provisions under the relevant Council resolutions; to collect first-hand information about the situation in Democratic Republic of the Congo and neighbouring States, including names for listing; to strengthen the dialogue between relevant stakeholders and the Committee; and to receive any concrete proposals that States might have with a view to strengthening the implementation of the sanctions regime, including requests for capacity-building. The terms of reference also noted that the visit was expected to feed into the Council's future review of the sanctions measures.

During my meetings in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, several themes resonated, namely, the upcoming elections; the recent interruption of joint operations between the Forces armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and MONUSCO; and the Democratic Republic of the Congo authorities' call for a reduction of 7,000 MONUSCO troops by the end of this year. In meetings with Government officials, civil society representatives and United Nations representatives, I touched upon the paradox between the Democratic Republic of the Congo's extensive natural resources and its difficult path towards governance, leaving the State unable to capitalize on its resources to generate wealth and further the development of the country and opportunities for its population. On a number of occasions, I was reminded of the Government's assertions that neighbouring States were complicit in smuggling networks linked to destabilizing activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo through the illicit trade in natural resources, and of allegations that members of the Government and FARDC elements were themselves complicit in such networks.

In a climate where serious efforts are needed to investigate and prosecute smuggling networks, and in the knowledge that no individuals have been sanctioned by the Committee since December 2012, I informed interlocutors that as the Chair of the Committee, I was interested in determining whether several well-placed sanction designations, substantiated of course by sufficient evidence, could target malefactors as a deterrent and strengthen the authority of the State. I encouraged interlocutors to put forward names of key spoilers in order to set an example for those operating at the mid-level and lower levels. The Minister of Interior of the Democratic Republic of the Congo voiced the readiness of his Government to work with the Group of Experts to provide suggested names for designations. However, when the Group of Experts held a up meeting in the Ministry on 12 June with a view to following up on my request, no such names were provided. We are still hoping to make progress on that point.

I wish to confirm that since the adoption of resolution 1807 (2008) in March of that year, the embargo no longer applies to the Government, and that the procedure of notifications to the Committee regarding the transfer of military equipment from supplier States to the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been simply for informational purposes. The Committee is willing to further engage on this matter with the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo if they so desire, with a view of providing any further clarifications.

On weapons stockpile management, I reiterated the Council's call on the Democratic Republic of the Congo to enhance stockpile security and implement a national weapons-marking programme, and I echoed the findings of the Group of Experts from a previous report that the FARDC remained the main source of weapons and ammunition for non-governmental armed groups. Stockpile security and weapons-marking need to be prioritized, as repeatedly called for by the Group of Experts and the Council itself, but there does not seem to be any movement on that issue.

In that connection, I wish to note that the United Nations Mine Action Service briefed the Committee on 6 March, and noted that financial constraints have limited the weapons and ammunition management assistance to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In my written report of the visit to the region, which was discussed on Friday in the Committee, I called upon Committee members to earmark funds to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action, with particular emphasis on the construction of new weapons depots in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. That is a tangible way that Council members can help move forward an issue that has seen little if any progress, and build the Democratic Republic of the Congo's capacity in weapons management and storage.

Another outcome of the visit was to pave the way for improved communication and collaboration between the Group of Experts and Governments, the United Nations and civil society members. As a Committee, we must follow up with the Group to ensure that the access promised to the members during my visit is granted.

In Rwanda, the general tenor of the meetings was positive, although the Rwandan side echoed the counter-argument to the Democratic Republic of the Congo's complaints that it was responsible for the problems in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It was made clear that the authorities felt the Democratic Republic of the Congo was using Rwanda unfairly as a scapegoat for problems that arose from governance issues. Rwandan officials felt that the responsibility rested with the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for achieving progress in areas such as the governance of the natural resource trade and the

neutralization of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda.

In Uganda, allegations emerged during meetings with the Minister of Defence and the Acting Director of Multilateral Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the armed group the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), sanctioned by the Committee in June 2014, has links with terrorist groups, such as Al-Shabaab. To date, the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo has not found any such links. In that context, I wish to express gratitude to the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for having arrested the sanctioned ADF leader Jamil Mukulu and agreed to Kampala's request to extradite him to Uganda. I also wish to thank the Ugandan authorities for having conveyed to me their intention to allow the Group of Experts to interview Mukulu and any of his associates arrested with him.

In Kampala, my delegation also held a breakfast meeting with representatives of the five permanent members of the Security Council, and spoke via video-teleconference with representatives of the Office of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Said Djinnit, in Nairobi. We also met with two representatives of a Kampala-based business that was sanctioned by the Committee in March 2007 for having purchased gold through a regular commercial deal with traders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo who are tightly linked to militias. The business is under investigation by the Ugandan authorities.

Since my briefing to the Council on 22 January, the Committee convened a formal meeting on 6 March with the States of the region and held three sessions of informal consultations on 31 March, 28 April and 10 July. At the 6 March meeting, the Committee invited the representatives of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania to share their views on the 2014 final report of the Group of Experts (see S/2015/19), together with our fellow Committee members Angola, on behalf of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), and South Africa, on behalf of the Southern African Development Community.

Following the 6 March meeting, the Committee took the unprecedented step of sending letters in May encouraging a number of the invited States to undertake investigations pursuant to recommendations of the Group of Experts. I handed copies of the letters addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda to interlocutors during the visit. The Committee intends to follow up these letters, as well as those that were sent to Burundi, South Africa and Tanzania. At the consultations on 31 March, the Committee heard a briefing by Mr. Alphonse Ntumba Luaba, Executive Secretary of the ICGLR, concerning its activities. During the consultations on 28 April, the Group of Experts provided an overview of its workplan on its current mandate.

Finally, during the Committee's consultations on Friday 10 July, the Coordinator of the Group of Experts provided an overview of the Group's progress update to the Committee, which was circulated on 2 July. I also conveyed a number of personal reflections on my visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, some of which I intend to echo during the Council's consultations following this meeting.

The President: I thank Mrs. Kawar for her briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Gata Mavita wa Lufuta (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, Sir, I should like to welcome the accession of your country, New Zealand, to the presidency of the Security Council and to congratulate you personally on the very able way in which you have conducted the discussions and the work of the Council since the beginning of the month. Allow me also to express the appreciation of my delegation to Mr. Ramlan Bin Ibrahim, Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations, for the way in which he presided over the deliberations of the Security Council in June. Finally, I would like to pay due tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his ongoing and unfailing concern for my country, as well as his personal involvement in strengthening peace in my country.

Today's meeting is an important and timely opportunity to take stock of the progress achieved in the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo since the Security Council adopted resolution 2211 (2015) on 26 March. We have taken note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2015/486) on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

We have taken careful note of the briefing provided by Mr. Martin Kobler, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the

Congo, whose presence among us today I welcome. We have also taken note of the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Jordan in her capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

My delegation requests the Council's understanding in revisiting a number of the points highlighted in the report that is the subject of our debate, particularly with regard to the implementation of the commitments made by my country under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, signed in Addis Ababa, relations with MONUSCO, the progress of the electoral process, and the security situation in the eastern part of my country.

As Council members are aware, my country's commitments under the Framework Agreement can be summarized by the following general points: the pursuit of security sector reform with regard to the army and the police, the consolidation of State authority in the east of my country, and the fight against armed groups. My country is also responsible for promoting the structural reform of State institutions, including finance reform, and for promoting the objectives of national reconciliation, tolerance and democracy. Three years after the signing of the Agreement, there is reason to claim that the Democratic Republic of the Congo has met most of its commitments. Since the Government put in place a legal and regulatory framework for the reforms to be undertaken in the implementation of the Framework Agreement, significant progress has been made, as acknowledged in the report of the Secretary-General.

In terms of relations with MONUSCO, the dialogue launched with the United Nations in the context of the strategic review continues. We are convinced that my Government will reach common ground with the United Nations and that an agreement will surely be reached on the issues that are the subject of the discussion.

Regarding the elections, I can confirm that the establishment of democracy in my country became a reality with the organization of the first truly free and democratic elections in our history in 2006; the organization of legislative and presidential elections, with a term expiring in 2011; effective decentralization; and the planned holding of local, municipal, urban, provincial, senatorial, parliamentary and presidential elections in 2015 and 2016. My delegation wishes to reassure the Council and to affirm the resolve of my Government to anchor itself more than ever in the democratic culture. Thus, after an open and lively debate, the National Independent Electoral Commission published a comprehensive calendar of upcoming elections and set the budget for the organization of the entire electoral cycle. This reflects our desire to organize transparent and credible elections.

But as recalled by His Excellency Mr. Joseph Kabila Kabange, President of the Republic and Head of State, in his address to the nation on the occasion of the commemoration of the fifty-fifth anniversary of the accession of our country to international sovereignty, the road leading to the third cycle of elections in our country is littered with a number of obstacles that must be removed so as to enable the conduct of elections in a peaceful climate.

Those obstacles are related to the comprehensive electoral calendar that was vociferously demanded by the opposition, yet immediately challenged after its publication, and to the financing of the electoral process which was assessed well after the adoption of the 2015 budget. The total requirement for the organization of the elections amounted to over $1 billion, while the actual budget for all Government requirements was limited to $9 billion. Another obstacle was the participation in the 2015 election of minors who came of age during the electoral cycle and were excluded by the electoral law. The law provides, in effect, that this important segment of the Congolese population can take part only in the upcoming elections after the renewal of the electoral register.

One last obstacle was the imperative of securing the electoral process. We had regrettable experience of political intolerance and rejection of the election results by the losers leading to deadly violence during and after the 2006 and 2011 elections. To address that situation, the President of the Republic has engaged the nation in consultations and dialogue with a view to uniting the majority, the opposition and civil society in an agreement on ways and means to overcome these obstacles. It is important to note here that the appeal for political dialogue on the part of the Head of State, is a matter for the Congolese, who must learn to talk to each other without foreign interference, as occurs everywhere else.

With regard to our partners and friends, we are confident that they will peacefully accompany the Democratic Republic of the Congo in this learning

exercise and strengthening of democracy by avoiding inappropriate interference, as I have already noted.

My Government has undertaken considerable efforts in security sector reform; these are well known to the Council and I shall therefore not dwell on them. With respect to the security situation, it is true that some parts of our country remain the subject of security concerns. That is particularly true regarding a few pockets of insecurity controlled by foreign armed groups in the provinces of North and South Kivu. The Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC), with the support of MONUSCO, are doing their best to secure Beni and its surrounding area, which remain under the threat of the Ugandan terrorists of the Allied Democratic Forces. In the same context, the FARDC continues to fight alone against the Rwandan rebels of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda, and its results have been encouraging.

Furthermore, the Government is determined to close the file on the former rebellion of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23), in the context of which the Government granted amnesty to many of its members for acts of war. As to their repatriation, the ninth Extraordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, held in Luanda on 18 May, recommended that the implementation of the Nairobi declarations be completed within three months and signed between the Congolese Government and the former rebels of M-23, particularly with regard to the repatriation of the former rebels cantonned in Rwanda and Uganda.

To that end, a Nairobi declarations assessment meeting was held on 7 July in Kinshasa to accelerate the repatriation of the former M-23 combatants. The coordinator of the national monitoring mechanisms observed that the Democratic Republic of the Congo should put all issues on the table with a view to finally closing the file, as indicated in the Nairobi report, by August, at the latest. A Congolese delegation, led by the Vice-Minister of National Defence, visited Kigali in early February, where he signed a statement with the Rwandan authorities on the repatriation of former M-23 rebels. A total of 453 former M-23 combatants, who had crossed the Rwandan border after their defeat by the FARDC in November 2013, were identified. It is our belief that the cases registered in Rwanda have been closed.

In Uganda, on the other hand, the Embassy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Kampala had received 1,763 individual commitments, while the amnesty committee received 1,678. The gap of 85 commitments represents the category of persons who had subscribed by mail and who, for the most part, were already on Congolese soil. To date, 1,670 files have been dealt with.

In the context of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the former M-23 combatants, Mr. Gressly, Deputy Special Representative of Secretary-General, has disbursed the first tranche as follows: $1.5 million on the part of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, $15 million on the part of the World Bank, $7 million on the part of Sweden and $6 million on the part of MONUSCO. The latter will provide an additional $7 million on 1 August. It should be pointed out that 2,985 ex-combatants entered training programmes with a viewed towards their socioeconomic reintegration. Some 1,692 ex-combatants were trained at the Kamina military base and 1,293 were trained at the Kitona base; all of them received a demobilization card. In contrast, the 819 ex-combatants who were trained at Kotakoli were all transferred to Kamina.

My Government takes careful note of the Secretary-General's comments and is determined to move forward in fulfilling its commitments under the Framework Agreement. It appreciates the true value of the assistance provided by the United Nations and hopes for, as stressed by the Secretary-General, greater and more active mobilization by the signatory States and guarantors of the Framework Agreement in implementing the commitments they have also undertaken so that the Great Lakes region may be a haven of peace, which is imperative if there is to be cooperation and development.

I would conclude by saying a word about the briefing made by the Chair of the Sanctions Committee. Our position on this issue is well known. The ongoing transfer of weapons to armed groups, or between armed groups, in violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions justifies the need for continued close monitoring of the implementation of the arms embargo and other measures imposed by the resolutions related to the Democratic Republic of Congo. But we should be wary of confusion: the Government, which is subject to the demands of reforming its armed forces and its security and police services, should not be put on the same footing as illegal armed groups, which freely obtain weapons to maintain insecurity. Basically, it

must be clear that the arms embargo applies only to armed groups.

Finally, my delegation wishes to express to all members of the Council the gratitude of the people and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for their dedication to the cause of their country.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.